

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /090 W

-----071112Z 102119 /20

R 070935Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 696

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL TANGIER

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 118

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MO, UR

SUBJECT: STATE OF SOVIET/MOROCCAN RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: SOVIET-MOROCCAN RELATIONS, WICH HAD COOLED AS A RESULT OF SOVIET PARTIALITY TOWARD ALGERIA ON THE SAHARA ISSUE, NOW APPEAR TO HAVE marginally INTENSIFIED WITH (A) A NEW AEROFLOT STOPOVER IN MOROCCO, (B) A VISIT BY THE SOVIET GEOLOGY MINISTER, AND (C) UNPUBLIXIZED MILITARY DISCUSSIONS. EMBASSY SEES NO SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGHS, HOWEVER. END SUMMARY

2. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE SIGN OF IMPROVEMENT IN SOVIET/MOROCCAN RELATIONS SINCE PRIME MINISTER OSMAN'S VISIT TO MOSCOW EARLY IN 1976 (SEE RABAT 1155), WHICH OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY MAP PRONOUNCED A "SUCCESS" BECAUSE IT PERMITTED "EXAMINATION OF STATE OF RELATIONS" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND GAVE "NEW
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IMPETUS" TO BILATERAL COOPERATION WHICH "WILL BE REFLECTED IN THEIR FUTURE RECIPROCAL RELATIONS." HOWEVER, EVENTS DURING MONTH OF DECEMBER INDICATE THAT BILATERAL ACTIVITY ON THE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY FRONTS HAS, AT LEAST marginally, INTENSIFIED. MOST NOTABLE EVENTS WERE THE FOLLOWING.

3. SEMI-OFFICIAL LE MATIN OF DECEMBER 2 ANNOUNCED INAUGURATION OF

ADDITIONAL AEROFLOT FLIGHT ORIGINATING IN MOSCOW AND TERMINATING IN GUINEA BISSAU WITH SCHEDULED STOPS AT BUDAPEST, CASABLANCA AND NOUADHIBOU. (WE UNDERSTAND AEROFLOT TU-114 FLIGHTS FROM MOSCOW TO

HAVANA WITH REFUELING STOP AT RABAT/SALE WILL CONTINUE.)

4. SOVIET MINISTER OF GEOLOGY EVGENI KOZLOVSKY, ACCOMPANIED BY CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS IN SOVIET MINISTRY OF GEOLOGY ALEXANDER KOLIAYNOV, AEROFLOT REPRESENTATIVE VLADIMIR ZEMLIANSKI, AND GEOLOGY EXPERTS VLADIMIR VYDRINE AND KONSTANTIN AXNOV, ARRIVED IN RABAT ON DECEMBER 14. SEMI-OFFICIAL AL-ANBAA CHARACTERIZED DELEGATION AS "IMPORTANT" AND DESCRIBED TALKS AS CONNECTED WITH SOVIET/MOROCCAN COOPERATION IN GEOLOGY. DELEGATION WAS TO VISIT "AREAS OF GEOLOGICAL INTEREST, ESPECIALLY THE RIF." PRESS GAVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER OSMAN AND STATED DELEGATION ALSO HELD TALKS WITH MINISTER OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, MINES AND MERCHANT MARINE ABDELLATIF GHISSASSI.

5. EARLY DECEMBER BROUGHT THE UNPUBLICIZED ARRIVAL OF A SOVIET MILITARY DELEGATION, APPARENTLY AT MOROCCAN INVITATION. EMBASSY'S SOURCES REPORT THAT THE TALKS DEALT LARGELY WITH POSSIBILITY OF DELIVERING 120 T-62 TANKS WITHIN NINETY DAY PERIOD FROM THE SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT. TALKS ALSO SAID TO HAVE ADDRESSED SUPPLY OF SPARE PARTS AND AMMUNITION FOR MILITARY HARDWARE ALREADY IN MOROCCAN ARSENAL. EMBASSY'S SOURCES INDICATE THAT NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED.

6. COMMENT: MOST NOTABLE CONCRETE ACCOMPLISHMENT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INAUGURATION OF ADDITIONAL AEROFLOT FLIGHT, CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR WHICH SOVIETS AFTER LONG DELAY OBTAINED GOM PERMISSION TO TRANSIT CASABLANCA FOR REFUELING PURPOSES. TANGIBLE RESULTS ACHIEVED BY SOVIET GEOLOGY DELEGATION ARE STILL DIFFICULT TO ASSESS, ALTHOUGH A WELL-PLACED SOURCE IN MINISTRY OF MINES TELLS US VISIT INVOLVED "MOSTLY TOURISM." WHILE LONG-PENDING ISSUE OF SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN MESKALA PHOSPHATE MINING PROJECT MAY HAVE BEEN RAISED, WE QUESTION WHETHER GOM IS PREPARED TO RESURRECT IT WITH USSR AT THIS TIME. ASIDE FROM POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, BASIC ECONOMIC QUESTION REGARDING SOVIET ASSURANCES OF NON-DIVERSION TO OTHER MARKETS REMAINS UNRESOLVED. THERE MAY, MOREOVER, HAVE BEEN RECENT MOROCCAN-SPANISH DISCUSSION OF SPANISH PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROJECT (SEE RABAT 6915). SINGLE MOST CONCENTRATED SOVIET EFFORT IN GEOLOGY REMAINS IN RIF MOUNTAINS AT JEBHA, WHERE FORTY-MAN SOVIET RESEARCH TEAM HAS BEEN ACTIVE FOR PAST TWO YEARS. ACCORDING TO CONSULATE GENERAL TANGIER SOURCE IN TETOUAN, SOVIET TEAM IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN PROSPECTING FOR NICKEL AND CONSTRUCTION OF SMALL PORT. AS FOR SOVIET MILITARY DELEGATION, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GOM WOULD LIKE MODERN SOVIET TANKS TO MATCH THOSE ALREADY IN THE ALGERIAN ARSENAL AND AS A POLITICAL SIGNAL TO ALGERIA, BUT

WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE SOVIETS WERE INCLINED TO BE RESPONSIVE.

7. WHILE EMBASSY PERCEIVES NO MAJOR SHIFTS IN GOM POLICY
TOWARD USSR, MOROCCANS MAY WELL DESIRE TO MOVE TOWARD MORE NORMAL
BILATERAL RELATIONS. SEEMINGLY, THE PAST SOVIET STAND ON THE
SAHARA ISSUE IS NO LONGER VIEWED BY GOM AS A DETERRENT TO IMPROVED
RELATIONS. INSTEAD, GOM PRESUMABLY SEES ITS INTERESTS AS WELL
SERVED IF SOVIETS COULD BE INDUCED TO BALANCE THEIR SUPPORT FOR
ALGERIA WITH LARGER EQUITIES IN MOROCCO.
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